

Message Text

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14

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 AID-05 ACDA-05 SAM-01 /089 W

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R 301814Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5955

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 01018

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, AO, CG, BE

SUBJECT: MERCENARIES TRANSIT BELGIUM EN ROUTE TO ZAIRE

1. FOREIGN MINISTRY'S VERKAMMEN (AFRICAN AFFAIRS) AND JAENEN (ZAIRE DESK) CONFIRMED JANUARY 29 PRESS REPORTS OF APPROXIMATELY 100 BRITISH MERCENARIES TRANSITING BRUSSELS EN ROUTE KINSHASA, REPORTEDLY ONE OF FIVE SIMILAR FLIGHTS OF MERCENARIES TO KINSHASA. THEY SAID FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD LITTLE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THIS FLIGHT ON PREVIOUS FLIGHTS. VERKAMMEN
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TOLD US THAT SABENA AIRCRAFT TRANSPORTING MERCENARIES WAS

CHARTERED BY AIR ZAIRE AND SAID MINISTRY BELIEVED MERCENARIES WERE HIRED BY ZAIRE PRESIDENT MOBUTU TO SHORE UP SECURITY OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND POSSIBLY TO MAN LONG ZAIRE-ANGOLA BORDER, RATHER THAN FOR USE IN ANGOLA. VERKAMMEN, CITING BELGIAN REPORTING, SAID THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY VIEWS FNLA AS "VIRTUALLY BEATEN" AND SAID THAT BOTH FNLA AND ZAIRE ARMY TROOPS WERE CROSSING BACK OVER FROM ANGOLA INTO ZAIRE. HE ALSO MENTIONED THREAT OF EX-KATANGA GENDARMES. HE TOLD US THAT BELGIAN CONSUL GENERAL AT MATADI (AAIRE) REPORTED BREAKDOWN OF PUBLIC ORDER IN THAT LOWER CONGO RIVER CITY, WITH BOTH FNLA AND ZAIRE ARMY TROOPS INVOLVED IN LOOTING.

2. VERKAMMEN SAID ANGOLA SITUATION HAS DIVERTED MOBUTU'S ATTENTION FROM ECONOMIC ISSUES. AS RESULT, SCHEDULED FEBRUARY MEETING OF SECOND ZAIRE-BELGIAN WORKING GROUP IN KINSHASA, AT WHICH TIME FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE WAS TO HAVE SIGNED AGREEMENT ON ZAIRIAN COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED BELGIAN ASSETS, WILL BE POSTPONED.

3. FOREIGN MINISTRY'S SPOKESMAN (AMBASSADOR BAEKELANDT) APPEARED ON TV TALK SHOW JANUARY 29 ON MERCENARY ISSUE, WHICH INCLUDED FILM CLIPS OF REPORTERS' INTERVIEWS WITH MERCENARIES. BAEKELANDT PUT BELGIAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION AS FOLLOWS:

-BELGIAN GOVERNMENT OPPOSED TO USE OF MERCENARIES ANYWHERE IN WORLD;

-BELGIAN GOVERNMENT AGAINST ALL FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA REGARDLESS OF SOURCE; AND

-BELGIAN LAW (1936) HAS SANCTIONS AGAINST RECRUITING OF MERCENARIES ON BELGIAN SOIL, BUT THAT TRANSITING OF PROPERLY-DOCUMENTED MERCENARIES NOT PRESENTLY UNLAWFUL. DRAFT LEGISLATION WITH SANCTIONS AGAINST TRANSIT OF FOREIGN MERCENARIES HAS YET TO BE PASSED.

4. MAN WHO CLAIMED TO REPRESENT COL. MIKE HOARE, WELL-KNOWN MERCENARY IN CONGO IN 1960'S TOLD ARMY ATTACHE JANUARY 30
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THAT HOARE GROUP, BASED IN LONDON, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR RECRUITING OF THIS PLANELOAD AS WELL AS OTHERS FOR TOTAL OF JUST OVER 1000 MEN ALREADY IN ZAIRE. HE TOLD ATTACHE THAT GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE WAS PAYING FOR THESE MERCENARIES AND THAT EACH MAN WAS PAID 150 STERLING PER WEEK, WITH VARIOUS BONUSES FOR LONGEVITY. CURRENT HIGH LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN GREAT BRITAIN MADE RECRUITMENT THERE OF EXPERIENCED MILITARY MEN EASY. DAO IS REPORTING ABOVE

IN DETAIL. FIRESTONE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERVENTION, AIR TRANSPORTATION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MERCENARIES, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BRUSSE01018
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760037-0381
From: BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976016/aaaaaeru.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 MAR 2004 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <28 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MERCENARIES TRANSIT BELGIUM EN ROUTE TO ZAIRE
TAGS: PFOR, PINR, AO, CG, BE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006